

# Village group delays freeway vote to April

By Doug Murphy  
Staff Writer

The Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee was not impressed with traffic-projection numbers created by the Maricopa Association of Governments and used by the Arizona Department of Transportation to justify the construction of the South Mountain Loop 202 Freeway.

But instead of taking a stand on the proposed freeway, the committee agreed to wait until April 24 so that ADOT representatives could be present to discuss the freeway and ways to better engage the public in the freeway planning process.

"I would like to hear ADOT on this," said Van Braswell, a member of the planning committee. "I for one haven't made up my mind and one month, after (discussing the freeway for) 10 years, shouldn't be a problem."

But Greta Rogers, a local resident who spoke to the planning committee Monday night, summed up the feelings of many when she said, "This is an absurd

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use of money."

One problem many planning committee members and residents have is believing the traffic projections produced by MAG that show the freeway would help slow congestion.

Old projections showed that the Loop 202 would reduce commute times on Interstate 10 at the Broadway curve by six minutes or less. New data shows a greater time saving, something that planning committee member Laurel Arndt found hard to believe. She called the new data a "complete flip-flop."

"Shaping information, packaging it the way you want," is how Arndt described the ever-changing traffic projections that have been used to show the impact of the freeway.

One map updated by ADOT and sent to the South Mountain Citizens

Advisory Team, which Arndt also sits on, shows that 26 percent of traffic on the Loop 202 would come from the East Valley, 10 percent from Ahwatukee Foothills itself, 39 percent from the West Valley and just 2 percent from Pinal County, despite the rapid growth in towns like Maricopa, Florence and Casa Grande projected to occur over the next 20 years.

"The growth in Maricopa is real, it will be a Chandler soon," Arndt said.

The traffic projections are part of the information that the citizens advisory team will use to decide a western route for the freeway later this month. But Arndt was not pleased with gaps in the information, which didn't include any data on the impact the Loop 202 would have on I-10

where they connect at either 55th or 71st avenues or at the Loop 101 interchange with I-10. "To me, that was a basic question - what happened to all that traffic?" Arndt said.

The one good piece of news is that Phoenix traffic engineers projected that traffic on Chandler Boulevard would be lessened in

2030 if a freeway were built.

But Don Herp, deputy streets transportation director, admitted that MAG and Phoenix have no information on what impact a freeway would have on streets like Liberty Lane.

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